

From *Seeing Yourself as Others Do* *Authentic Executive Presence at Any Stage of Your Career*

MEETING BASICS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You can decide to have excellent meetings. Even in an environment where meetings are poorly run, you can be the exception. The following guidelines are meeting fundamentals, which can help you display executive presence. They're common principles, which are constantly violated.

1. Be clear about the **purpose** of the meeting, even if it is a routine team meeting. Ask if there is a better way to achieve the objective than having a meeting. If it is a regular meeting, can you do it half as often and be just as effective?
2. Only invite those that can bring value or have a need to know, and be clear about your expectations.
3. Have a timed **agenda** distributed well in advance of the meeting. If people only need participate for a small segment of the agenda, let them come and go for their time slot. Indicate the agenda item is for decision, discussion or feedback.
4. Start and end **on time** (or early if possible). We know a Vice President who locked the door at the start time of his staff meetings. Anyone who was not there was not able to attend. He only had to do this a few times to make the message clear. Start on time even if not everyone is present, because it is respectful to those who do arrive on time.
5. Be clear **why each person attends** and be clear about his or her role. Even if higher-level people are in the meeting, remember you are running the meeting.
6. **Stick to the agenda**, but promote discussion and debate.
7. Bring each point to conclusion, and **document the conclusion**. If there are follow-up actions, be sure the responsibilities are clear and accepted in the meeting by someone who is in the meeting. If the action is for someone not in attendance, someone present in the meeting should have that action until it is accepted by someone else.
8. Make the meeting **interesting**. Bring in food, show a movie clip to illustrate your concept, read an email from a satisfied customer. Break up the routine positively.
9. Send out **minutes** with the action items to the meeting participants. Copy those that have a need to know and were not at the meeting.
10. Seek feedback from participants on how future meetings could be improved.

Participating In Meetings with Executive Presence

If you are a participant invited to a meeting, you can ask the organizer about the purpose and your role in the meeting if they have not already offered that information.

Be a role model for being prepared and engaged in the meeting by doing the following:

Know what you want to achieve in the meeting.

Monitor your talk-time to see that you are participating enough without talking too much.

Pick your battles.

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Continually look at the OPPOV being demonstrated by the other participants.

Be as authentically supportive of others in the meeting as possible.

In relation to the last point, here's a question we get all the time: "What should I do when an idea I throw out on the table is not accepted and a few days later someone else suggests my idea. The group jumps on it and gives that person credit? How do I maintain my poise and still manage to get acknowledged for my contribution when a peer is ripping off my idea?"

The manner in which you deliver the message and how well you tie it back to what others are concerned about make all the difference. It's important not to take this slight personally. Most groups have very short memories for who said what. In the crush of doing business today, if you just bring up an idea once, or say it quickly without much energy, others probably won't recognize you for it. So rather than get mad and pout or feel slighted and plot your revenge, get engaged!

Immediately bridge what was just said by others to your idea with comments like, "I completely agree with what Jim is saying. It's completely in line with what I spoke about in our last meeting, when I talked about creating a strategy where we get that information in advance." This way you subtly remind others that you were the one who had brought it up in the first place.